

**BUDGET COMMITTEE
of the
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Budget Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on June 20, 2001.

Members Present:

Legislator Michael Caracciolo - Chairperson
Legislator Cameron Alden - Vice-Chairman
Legislator David Bishop

Also In Attendance:

Paul Sabatino II - Counsel to the Legislature
Clark Gavin - Aide to Presiding Officer Tonna
Fred Pollert - Director of Budget Review
Jim Spero - Deputy Director of Budget Review
Karen Boorshtein - Family Service League
Todd Johnson - County Executive's Office
All other interested parties

Minutes Taken By:

Donna Barrett - Court Stenographer

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(*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 11:15 A.M.*)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Okay. We're going to convene the committee with Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Alden.

SALUTATION

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Karen Boorshtein, would you please come up. I know you wanted to speak on IR 1140. Thank you. I know that you made yourself available this morning, and you are pressed for time. So --

MS. BOORSSTEIN:

Thank you. Thank you for getting me up here quickly. Legislator Caracciolo, other Members of the Suffolk County Legislative Budget Committee, I'm Karen Boorshtein, Associate Executive Director of Family Service League. And I'm here to address Resolution 1140 to ask for your help with a very pressing issue; saving children and saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

As you probably know, Suffolk County has the largest child and youth population in New York State outside of New York City. Many of these children are in serious trouble, some of them at very high risk of being placed in residential treatment facilities. Often, placement is off Long Island either Upstate or in surrounding states. When children and youth with bad behaviors are put together, such behaviors can worsen. If, over time, the child's condition improves, he's returned home. He may well revert to bad behaviors because he's returning home to the same conditions which he left. Family Service League has developed a unique program, which keeps the child at home.

We work intensively with the child and the family, we wrap services around them and focus on their assets. In 90% of the cases, children and youth who are referred to FSL by Suffolk Department of Probation, Mental Health and Social Services are about to be placed in residential treatment facilities. We successfully avert the placements in 90% of the cases. In other instances in which a child is placed in foster care, we're successful in having the child returned to his home of origin much sooner. Because residential placements with annual costs of 50 to \$80,000 a year don't occur, we're saving Suffolk County tax payers huge resources each year.

As you requested of us on May 21st, when we last came here, we received and forwarded to you copies of letters from Commissioner Dan Hickey, Department of Social Services and Vinny Iaria, the Director of the Suffolk County Probation Department. Our two programs Home Base and Home Safe are County-wide and serve children and families from Greenport and Orient Point all the way to the Suffolk/Nassau border. Today we're here to ask for your help with this and Resolution 1140. The salaries that we pay our Child and Family Team Coordinators are just too low. We're at risk of losing carefully selected, well-trained, dedicated and caring staff who work in these programs. Team coordinators begin at \$21,000 a year. We're asking for your funds -- for your funds to help raise these salaries to 25,000, a

total in both programs of \$36,000.

Resolution 1140 was introduced by Legislator Postal earlier this year to ensure the continuation of the staff. If this matter is not rectified, I fear we will lose the staff because they can no longer continue to live on the salaries we've been paying. If they leave for higher paying positions, our positions in these programs may be impossible to fill. The results of this are that children will be placed and at risk of greater problems and higher placement costs. It only makes sense to act now and prevent this from happening. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Karen, you've made it very clear in both your -- this presentation and your correspondence, as well as the correspondence I requested and

received from Commissioner Hickey, that this is a cost-wise and cost-effective program. That said, I do support the resolution. I'd just like to ask Budget Review, the \$36,000 that's enumerated in the resolution, that would have to be prorated -- because that was an annual cost or a cost of at least February of this year almost March when it was introduced -- so the financial impact would be substantially less if the Legislature approved this resolution?

MR. SPERO:

Yeah, well cut in half, really because we're half through this current year, so --

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Okay. So, you know, the financial impact is also substantially reduced. But let me ask you, the conversation we had Monday was to determine whether or not the County Executive will be submitting a budget over to us that will include a cost to continue program funding for your agency next year that will take into account this salary adjustment. Have you met with any success?

MS. BOORSSTEIN:

I know I've spoken to Vinny Iaria, and he side the budget he did put forth included the increase. And with the Department of Social Services, they said that we will have to continue to work with the County Exec's Office, they support it, but they were advised that they can't submit a budget with any increase cost. But they said they will support our endeavors to work with the County Exec to have him authorize this.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Okay. The sole representative here from the Executive Branch, are you familiar with the resolution? Do you have a comment or position?

MR. JOHNSON:

No.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

No. Okay. All right. Counsel, since the committee lacks its full membership, we will not be able to take up this or any other resolution today, is that the rule that we operate under in this committee?

MR. SABATINO:

You won't be able to approve because you need the unanimous vote to get to -- to get to the "three-quarters rule." So you can table bills -- you can consider the bills because you have a quorum, but you won't be able to approve or discharge.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Could I circulate a petition under our legislative rules and file it

by deadline, which is Friday?

MR. SABATINO:

You can't do the written petition, but you can -- for this committee, you can't do the written petition, but what you could do is the discharge motion on the floor because that would take a motion to wave the "discharge rule."

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Okay. Karen, I will attempt to do so next Tuesday at our Legislative Meeting, and at that time, it will probably be helpful if you came and made a presentation.

MS. BOORSHTEN:

On Tuesday?

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Tuesday, during the Public Portion, which begins at 9:30 A.M., here.

MS. BOORSHTEN:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Okay. Thank you very much. Since the committee lacks its full membership, the Chair has no option but to adjourn. Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Actually, you could actually recess it and then we could -- we could do a meeting on Tuesday.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Would that be another option, Counsel?

MR. SABATINO:

It's another option. If you don't want to table these bills, you could recess the meeting to the lunch break, 12:30, on the 26th and then convene a 15 minute meeting.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Okay. The Chair's going to make a motion to recess the committee until a time to be designated by the Chair on Tuesday, the 26th of June, 2001.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Seconded by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Unanimous. We now stand in recess. Thank you.

(*THE MEETING WAS RECESSED AT 11:20 A.M.*)

(*THE MEETING WAS RECONVENED AT 12:40 P.M. on June 26, 2001*)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

The Chair will call the committee to order. We'll have the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by Legislator Alden.

SALUTATION

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Is there any -- I don't have any cards. Anyone in the audience that would like to address the committee? There being none, we'll go right to today's agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

1135. Amending the Adopted 2001 Operating Budget and appropriating funds to implement Osteoporosis Testing Program in Suffolk County. (Postal)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Do I hear a motion?

LEG. BISHOP:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Motion by Legislator Bishop. Seconded by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1135 is tabled.

TABLED (VOTE: 3-0-0-0)

1140. Amending the Adopting 2001 Operating Budget and appropriating funds for Family Service League. (Postal)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Motion by the Chair to approve. Seconded by Legislator Bishop. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Approved. APPROVED (VOTE: 3-0-0-0)

1421. Amending the 2001 Operating Budget and transferring funds for the contracted agency Suffolk County United Veterans Transportation Services. (D'Andre)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Do I hear a motion?

LEG. BISHOP:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Motion to table by Legislator Bishop. Seconded by the Chair. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Tabled. TABLED (VOTE: 3-0-0-0)

1423. Amending the 2001 Operating budget transferring funds for various contract agencies. (Crecca)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:
Legislator Crecca.

LEG. BISHOP:
Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:
Well, I'd like to recognize Legislator Crecca for the purpose of brief statement.

LEG. CRECCA:
Yeah, these represent funds that couldn't -- were unable to be allocated during the Budget Year 2000 that were previously in there. They were put over into this year's budgets, they have no fiscal impact on this year's budget.

CHAIRMAN BISHOP:
And you're change -- you're consistent with the original purpose?

LEG. CRECCA:
For the most part. Let me -- the original purpose was to preserve the Smithtown movie theatre in a joint effort between the Arts Council and the and the Historical Society in Smithtown. That project -- I've been working with the Arts Council and the Historical Society -- was never able to be completed. And the money is now being shared between the Arts Council and the Historical Society for programming in Smithtown. There is an additional 35,000 that's being used for another purpose, but within the same town. So --

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:
Do we --

LEG. BISHOP:
What's the \$35,000 additional?

LEG. CRECCA:
Thirty thousand is going for -- to the Hauppauge Youth Organization as part of an ongoing project to fix up the complex fields right here behind the Dennison Building, and the other 5,000 is going to the YMCA as part of their project for improvements for youth programs.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
Tell us a little bit more about this theatre partnership.

LEG. CRECCA:
It's not happening. The United Artist Theatre -- the original intended purpose for it -- was not interested in selling. It would not work with the Arts Council to sell that project. And that project, both organizations, support this bill and will not be moving forward with this at this time. If it changes in the future, we may readdress it, but at this point after a year and a half of

negotiations, they've been unable to move forward with that project.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Okay. Budget Review, could you just quickly go through the organizations that would receive County funding?

MR. POLLERT:

Basically, there are four organizations; the Smithtown Historical Society would receive \$100,000, the Smithtown Township Arts Council would receive \$100,000, the Hauppauge Youth Organization would receive \$30,000, and the Smithtown YMCA would receive \$5,000.

CHAIRMAN CARRACIOLO:

The funding for the YMCA, would what that be used for?

LEG. CRECCA:

For youth programs that they sponsor in the Town of Smithtown.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Okay. I bring that up because in my district there have been a number of proposals for a YMCA facility. And based on inquiry that I have made of Legislative Counsel, we cannot enter into partnership with the YMCA for facilities; is that not correct, Counsel?

MR. SABATINO:

I think the request that I had gotten was to actually construct their facilities, that you can't do. If they're providing some kind of a service that fits into one of our governmental categories, then you get funding for that. So I think the issue in your situation was they wanted to actually build a facility that would --

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Yeah, they were looking for a grant from the County to help assist with their Building Program.

LEG. CRECCA:

Yeah, they currently are under contract with the County for Youth Services there. This is just to expand one of their existing programs.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Very good. Okay. There is a motion by Legislator Bishop. Seconded by the Chair. All in favor?

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll abstain. Change my vote to a yes.

CHAIRMAN CARRACIOLO:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Unanimous. APPROVED

(VOTE: 3-0-0-0).

1438. Amending the 2001 Operating Budget and transferring funds in connection with parking lot improvements on Little East Neck Road. (Tonna)

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Is there a motion? Motion to table by the Chair.

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LEG. BISHOP:

I want to get an explanation.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Counsel.

MR. SABATINO:

1438 was tabled after a loud discussion at the last Legislative Session because there was a technical correction that was necessary. That correction was made. This is the money that was going to cover the Little East Neck Road Downtown Revitalization that came out of the old omnibus. Budget Review provided that technical correction, and a corrected copy was filed.

LEG. BISHOP:

Motion to approve. It's within the omnibus and the sponsor is seeking to release it.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Unanimous. APPROVED

(VOTE: 3-0-0-0-0)

1441. Amending the Adopted 2001 Operating Budget and transferring funds in connection with Touro Law Center Elderlaw Clinic. (Alden)

LEG. BISHOP:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Motion to table by Legislator Bishop. Seconded by Legislator Alden.

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Unanimous. TABLED

(VOTE: 3-0-0-0)

That concludes the business before the committee. We stand adjourned.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 12:50 P.M.*)

